

Introduced Version

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. ____

Introduced by: Smith V

A HOUSE RESOLUTION to honor Hazel Bratton Sanders on receiving her diploma from the Gary Community School Corporation more than forty (40) years after being the target of racial injustice while a high school student in Gary, Indiana.

Whereas, Hazel Bratton Sanders lived through a bitter chapter in Gary, Indiana history, namely the effort to integrate Gary Schools in 1927;

Whereas, Hazel Bratton Sanders, at just 14 years of age, was selected as one of eleven (11) African American teens to integrate Emerson High School in September 1927;

Whereas, Hazel Bratton Sanders was met immediately with intolerance when she began attending Emerson High School in that some teachers refused to instruct her while others refused her entry into the classroom;

Whereas, Hazel Bratton Sanders was intimidated by jeering students and threatened with physical violence while she matriculated at Emerson High School;



Whereas, the threats of physical violence became more deadly when some Caucasian students protested the presence of the African American students and threatened to stone Hazel Bratton Sanders and the other African American students if they continued to attend Emerson High School;

Whereas, the protest lasted for a few days so that Hazel Bratton Sanders and the other African American students were taken out of Emerson High School;

Whereas, Hazel Bratton Sanders subsequent efforts to enroll in East Pulaski High School in order to finish school failed;

Whereas, the entire experience caused Hazel Bratton Sanders to become so ill that she eventually gave up and dropped out of school;

Whereas, education remained an important value for Hazel Bratton Sanders so that after fifteen (15) years of marriage and while raising a twelve (12) year old daughter, Hazel Bratton Sanders continued her education through a correspondence course and obtained her high school diploma in 1946;

Whereas, Hazel Bratton Sanders continued her education by taking courses whenever she could at Roosevelt College in Chicago, Illinois;

Whereas, on January 23, 2001 the Gary Community School Corporation honored Hazel Bratton Sanders, the sole survivor among the original eleven (11) African American students, and the ten (10) deceased students posthumously, with High School Diplomas in recognition of their courage and perseverance during a racially charged time in the history of the Gary public schools; and

Whereas, Hazel Bratton Sanders is a role model of courage, determination and perseverance for African American teens and all teens in her zeal to obtain an education in spite of difficult challenges and controversy in her educational journey: Therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the
General Assembly of the State of Indiana:



1 SECTION 1. That the Indiana House of Representatives
2 recognizes Hazel Bratton Sanders as a civil rights leader in the effort
3 to integrate the Gary public schools, specifically for her determination
4 and perseverance in obtaining a high school diploma on her own and
5 for continuing to educate herself as circumstances allowed in spite of
6 the trauma she suffered in an attempt to integrate Gary, Indiana's
7 Emerson High School in 1927.

8 SECTION 2. That the Indiana House of Representatives
9 congratulates Hazel Bratton Sanders on her recognition by the Gary
10 Community School Corporation with the award of her High School
11 Diploma more than forty years after her courageous effort to integrate
12 Emerson High School in 1927.

13 SECTION 3. That the Principal Clerk of the House of
14 Representatives transmit a copy of this resolution to Hazel Bratton
15 Sanders and the Gary Community School Corporation.

